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AUTHOR Golub, Lester S.
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ABSTRACT

Combining goals from Teacher Corps and Individually Guided Education Programs, this paper presents seven mutually exclusive goals for teachers of middle school reading programs. They are: teachers will learn to conduct a needs assessment; teachers will involve parents and the community; teachers will use multicultural considerations in the reading program; teachers will use individualized diagnostic/prescriptive instructional approaches; teachers will work collaboratively with school staff, parents, faculty, Teacher Corps interns, student teachers, and students; teachers, with student and parent involvement, will evaluate students' progress toward learning objectives; and each teacher's performance will be observed and critiqued for continuous improvement of the reading program. The statement of each goal is followed by suggestions for implementation. (TJ)

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Reading in the Middle School Using An IGE/Teacher Corps Instructional Model

Lester S. Golub
The Pennsylvania State University

Teacher Corps and Individually Guided Education programs frequently have embedded in their structure goals which bring special awareness to teachers which might otherwise go unattended, especially for teachers in low-income, semi-isolated urban and rural schools. Since Teacher Corps and Individually Guided Education are model teacher education, in-service programs, five goals have been extracted from each program and approaches to the implementation of these goals will be presented.

The Teacher Corps goals, selected because they pertain to a middle-school reading program, are:

1. Teachers will learn to conduct a needs assessment.
2. Teachers will involve parents and community.
3. Teachers will use multicultural considerations in the reading program.
4. Teachers will use individualized diagnostic/prescriptive instructional approaches.
5. Teachers will work collectively with school staff, parents, faculty, Teacher Corps interns, and students.

The Individually Guided Education goals, selected because they pertain to a middle-school reading program, are:

1. Teachers base each student's learning program on specified learning objectives.
2. Teachers consider students' (a) peer relationships, (b) achievement, (c) learning style, (d) subject matter interests, and (e) self-concept.
3. Teachers, with student and involvement, evaluate progress toward learning objectives.
4. Teachers' performance is observed and critiqued for continuous improvement of the reading program.

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Since there is an overlap in these two groups of goals, the balance of this paper will take the mutually exclusive goals and show how teachers can make progress toward the implementation of these goals.

1. Teachers will learn to conduct a needs assessment.

For teachers in the middle school to learn to conduct a needs assessment of the reading program in their school, they must become involved in the needs assessment process. First, a task force must be selected. This task force organizes, manages, and prepares the needs assessment report. All the teachers are involved in the data collection. The task force should include: (1) an outside needs assessment consultant, (2) a curriculum supervisor, (3) the school principal, (4) the reading coordinator, (5) a reading specialist, (6) three classroom teachers (one from each grade level, and (7) at least one parent.

The task force is responsible for collecting the following data: (1) pupil reading performance, (2) pupil attitudes and interests and parent attitudes, (3) a description of the reading program organization, management, and implementation, and evaluation, (4) resources including personnel, dollar expenditure per pupil, textbooks and supplementary materials, school library, and policy-making decisions.

From this procedure, teachers should be able to come to a consensus of their meeting standards of excellence and to project measurable goals and objectives for the reading program.

2. Teachers will involve parents and community.

Parents and community are important in implementing IGE and Teacher Corps goals into a reading program in the middle school. The goals of

both programs are innovative enough so that re-education and involvement of parents in the community is extremely important in obtaining "carry-home" support for the program.

Here are suggestions for implementing the parent/community involvement goal: (1) before the goal of this reading program is implemented, the teachers, administrators, parents, and students participate in a "We Agree" workshop which builds concensus about the meaning and outcomes of these goals; (2) meetings are also held to orient all parents to the goals of this program; (3) parents are also recruited to participate in the reading program at school and at home; (4) a group of teachers and parents develop and produce communication devices for informing the community of pupil activities in the program; (5) parent-student-teacher conferences are held at least twice a year; (6) parents, teachers, and community members participate together in some kind of human development activity; (7) formal surveys of parents' opinions and attitudes are conducted; (8) staff members are available to present programs to community groups; and (9) each teacher makes one positive parent/community contact each day.

3. Teachers will use multicultural considerations in the reading program.

In order to implement this goal, teachers need an awareness of the purposes of multicultural considerations in the reading program. The purpose of multicultural considerations in the reading program in the middle school is to develop young citizens who can function within the multicultural framework of a contemporary United States, enjoying, accepting, understanding, and valuing the contributions of many ethnic

heritages of a diversity of people and ideas. Multicultural considerations are much more than teaching about cultural artifacts such as food, dress, and holidays; but rather, it is the incorporating of self-esteem, critical thinking, and valuing into a reading program.

Multicultural considerations in the reading program encompass five dimensions:

(1) Development of a strong self-esteem in each child, allowing that child to become an individual who knows his roots, his worth, and the need not to be cast in a common mold.

(2) Development of personal interaction skills so that each child can meet, communicate with, and interact positively with people of all kinds.

(3) Development of a sense of value in diversity so that the child is not treatened by diversity in others and can function in environments where there is diversity.

(4) Development of cultural knowledge so that the individual child is informed of the contributions of the various cultures of his local community, the state, the nation, and the world.

(5) Development of critical thinking so that the child can think through, articulate, and defend his own cultural awareness and values.

Teachers can be given a check list of pupil/teacher behaviors for each of these multicultural dimensions so that both teacher and pupil in the reading program become aware of individual multicultural behaviors, awareness, and attitudes.

4. Teachers will use individualized diagnostic/prescriptive instructural approaches.

Teachers participating in a middle school reading program will receive students with a wide range of reading ability, interests, learning styles, and self-esteem. For teachers to use individualized diagnostic/prescriptive instructional approaches, they must learn to diagnose: (1) peer relationships, (2) individual pupil achievement, (3) learning styles, (4) pupil interests and attitudes toward reading, and (5) pupil self-esteem.

The activities suggested here will aid teachers in using individualized, diagnostic/prescriptive instruction in the middle school reading program: (1) measurable goals and objectives as determined by the needs assessment for the program are selected for the program before students are put into the program; (2) a variety of learning activities are identified for each objective using a variety of sources, not just one reading series or text book; (3) a learning style and study skill profile is developed for each student and recorded in his file; students, teachers and parents are aware of this profile, and students are encouraged to develop new and improved learning styles and study skills; (4) teachers use sociometric or classroom observational techniques to understand peer relationships so that "super stars" and "isolates" are grouped appropriately, and a student is allowed to work productively with at least one other pupil; (5) pupil performance data should be as descriptive as possible to minimize unnecessary repetitions and to pinpoint difficulties. Teachers are taught how to use and construct criterion-referenced tests to determine pupil achievement of program goals and objectives. Teachers in the reading program are instructed in the strategy for using cloze

tests, individual reading inventories, and miscue analysis for determining pupil comprehension, vocabulary, and linguistic development. Teachers learn to give and interpret at least two norm-reference, standardized tests, and to assess listening, speaking and writing ability of pupils. A management program is needed to accompany the pupil performance aspect of diagnostic/prescriptive instruction. (6) Students who lack self-esteem are given activities in which the likelihood of success is high; all students participate in multicultural activities to develop cultural awareness and self-esteem. (7) Pupils' individualized learning programs are consistant with (a) pupil performance, (b) attitudes and interests, (c) future goals, (d) parent requests, (e) pupil-teacher interactions, (f) graduation requirements, (g) career goals and interests.

5. Teachers will work collaboratively with school staff, parents, faculty, Teacher Corps interns, student teachers, and students.

Before the middle school reading program is implemented each term, the students, teachers, administrators, Teacher Corps interns, student teachers, and aides are collaboratively organized into "reading, and writing communities." Student/teacher diagnostic data is used for this purpose. A reading and writing community leader is collaboratively chosen for each reading and writing community. This person should have special training or interest in reading, writing, and individualization of instruction.

Suggestions for implementing this goal include: (1) the principal interacts with teachers so that they are aware of their role in the reading and writing community and collaborative procedures are developed

for (a) selection of reading community leaders, (b) selection of teachers and students for each reading and writing community. (2) An area or cluster of spaces or rooms is assigned each reading and writing community, each pupil, and each learning community team. (3) Each reading and writing community interviews interns, students teachers, and aides for selection according to needs of the community. (4) Open communication is established for all students, teachers, interns, student teachers, and aides within a reading and writing community. (5) Communication devices are established for intercommunity exchange. (6) Human development activities are brought to members of reading and writing communities in order to help members (a) respond to one another's needs, (b) trust one another's motive and abilities, and (c) use techniques of open communication.

6. Teachers, with student and parent involvement, evaluate students' progress toward learning objectives.

The most useful criterion for the success of the middle school reading program is pupil performance in the program. Teachers have the responsibility of evaluating pupil performance, however, students and their parents should be involved in this procedure. Some suggestions for implementing this goal are: (1) Students understand and articulate their goals and objectives and know what has to be done to accomplish this behavior. (2) Students, teachers, and parents are involved in determining and planning for achievement of the goals and objectives. (3) Teachers maintain adequate records of pupil performance and periodically report progress to students and parents. (4) Evaluation check points are built into the individual, diagnostic/prescriptive reading program. (5) Teachers

have a file of manila folders for each pupil which is easily accessible to pupil and parents. (6) Students are present and assist in reporting achievement to parents; students report (a) what has been accomplished since last conference and (b) what objectives are being planned for the future. (7) Teachers, students, and parents plan programs so that they are consistent with goals. (8) Parents are asked to make requests and are aware of the implementation of these requests.

7. Teachers' performance is observed and critiqued for continuous improvement of the reading program.

During the course of the middle school reading program, teachers attempt to meet specific competencies which will contribute to their successful participation in the reading and writing community. Other teachers and university personnel are invited to observe for continuous improvement of these competencies which include:

Teacher Competency Cluster 1. Teacher as Planner

1.1 Identifies and diagnoses individual needs

1.2 Identifies and diagnoses sub group needs

1.3 Selects appropriate long range goals for learners

1.4 Selects appropriate specific learning objectives

1.5 Plans appropriate activities based on the specific learning objectives and affective factors

- 1.5.1 peer relationships
- 1.5.2 previous experience
- 1.5.3 learning style and study skills
- 1.5.4 subject matter and career interests
- 1.5.5 self-esteem
- 1.5.6 special education needs

1.6 Shares learning responsibilities with:

1.6.1 reading and writing community
1.6.2 parents and students

Teacher Competency Cluster 2. Teacher as Director of Learning Experience

2.1 Uses a variety of:

2.1.1 media and resources
2.1.2 instructional strategies

2.2 Monitors learning experiences to measure pupil performance and goal attainment

2.3 Uses principles of learning to promote the rate and quality of learning

2.4 Interviews when appropriate to modify learning experiences

2.5 Uses a variety of:

2.5.1 grouping patterns
2.5.2 scheduling patterns

2.6 Helps students become confident, self-directed learners

Teacher Competency Cluster 3. Teacher as Assessor and Evaluator

3.1 Systematically gathers and records learning information about each student.
3.2 Uses a variety of data sources to assess learning:

3.2.1 observation
3.2.2 teacher-made tests
3.2.3 criterion-referenced tests
3.2.4 norm-referenced tests

3.3 Constructively critiques effectiveness of:

3.3.1 teacher's own teaching
3.3.2 reading and writing community planning
3.3.3 instructional planning within school

3.4 Shares responsibility for assessment and evaluation with:

3.4.1 students
3.4.2 parents

Teacher Competency Cluster 4. Teacher as Humanizer

4.1 Exhibits and develops positive self concepts

4.2 Has an effective working relationship with students and teachers as exhibited by:

- 4.2.1 responding to individual student and other teachers' needs
- 4.2.2 trusting their motives and abilities
- 4.2.3 using techniques of open communication

4.3 Recognizes and responds positively to cultural alternatives in society and multicultural considerations in the classroom

4.4 Recognizes and responds positively to the developmental needs of specific age groups

4.5 Recognizes and responds positively to the differing needs of the exceptional learner:

- 4.5.1 in the classroom
- 4.5.2 in the total school program

4.6 Participates in community activities and programs and responds positively to the community to which the leader and the school belong

A check list is available for all teachers in the middle school program.

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